

On the Line

# Khrush Gets an Excuse

By BOB CONSIDINE

**C**HAIRMAN OF THE HORDE N. S. Khrushchev now appears to have been given a racy talking point and the germ of an excuse to appear before the UN General Assembly.

Judging from the preliminary tone of the Soviet Union's note of protest about the nine-minute U-2 flights over Sakhalin Island, Khrushchev seems to have worked up almost as much choler over this as he was able to generate when Francis Gary Powers tumbled out of the sky near Sverdlovsk.



CONSIDINE

It therefore seems reasonable to expect Khrushchev not only to show up but to come to UN in a fist-shaking and maybe even shoe-banging mood. He almost certainly will use this incident as the improbable, but still alarmingly noisy, reason to tell the delegates of the 104 UN countries a lot of heady lies about the U. S. It is a foregone conclusion that he will use the U-2 affair as a launching pad to fly into rages about Berlin, maintenance of U. S. military bases overseas, use of UN troops in the Congo, Colonialism, and the "threat" against Cuba.

He's a lucky bum to have an event of this particular nature fall in his lap. The first U-2 affair provided him with the lever with which to upset the Summit Conference and to prove to his cynical friend Mao Tse-tung and home-grown detractors that he wasn't afraid of insulting the President of the United States. The second U-2 case presents to him, on a silver tray, another excuse to blow his stack and appear less ludicrous while doing so.

WHAT THIS WILL DO to the Kennedy-Khrushchev meeting that was just beginning to take shape in the minds of planners remains to be seen. If Khrushchev is verbally truculent before the world organization the Presi-

dent will be called upon to make a verile reply, and exchanges of that sort seldom lead to tea at the White House.

Part of Khrushchev's fever, over what the communique called the "gross violation of the Soviet frontier" probably can be traced to the fact that Soviet defenses on that forlorn island that hovers like a clipper over Japan, could not shoot the plane out of the sky. This would be inclined to shake the faith of Russians who were solemnly assured not so long ago that Soviet airspace was now puncture-proof—protected by all sorts of ground-to-air rockets, air-to-air missiles that can "home in" on an enemy, and supersonic planes. The U-2 is one of the world's slowest jets. And completely defenseless.

It will be some time before the full story of latest U-2 incident is known. But it is heartening to note that in this instance we did not make of ourselves the damned fools we resembled in the first hours after our spy, Powers, was plinked.

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POWERS WAS A SPY, hired by the CIA for the bargain rate of \$2,500 a month, to obtain vital information about a powerful and isolated nation, whose Godless bible calls upon its people to rule the world. He and others secured that information about the Soviet Union. We have better aerial maps of the USSR than they have. The U-2 program continues to be a worthwhile arm of our counterespionage service. A breakdown or two should not cause it to be disbanded or downgraded. If anything, what with the Soviets building up their muscle in Cuba, U-2 flights should be stepped up. They can bring back a massive amount of information from every flight, much of it vital to the welfare of the nation. One U-2 is worth a dozen secret agents because, as Khrushchev himself once pointed out to Allen Dulles, most of them are double-crossing double agents, taking dough both from Washington and Moscow, whereas a U-2 has never developed the knack of cheating.